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THE SUPPORT OF SCHOOLS, THE HIGHEST MUNICIPAL INTEREST.

THE thirty-third section of the fifteenth chapter of the Revised Statutes, requires, that every town at its annual meeting, shall choose, among other town officers, "a school committee of three, five, or seven persons." By the twelfth section of the twenty-third chapter, any town, containing more than four thousand inhabitants, may choose an additional number not exceeding six on such committee. The eighteenth section of the fifteenth chapter prescribes that "the annual meeting of each town shall be held in the month of March or April." By the twelfth section of the same chapter, "towns have power, *at any legal meeting*, to grant and vote such sums of money as they shall judge necessary for the support of town schools." Though it is legally competent for towns to grant money for the support of schools, at any time during the year, yet it is the general practice of the towns to vote their appropriation in March or April.

Before another number of our work shall have reached the hands of our subscribers, some of the towns in this State will have acted upon the two most important subjects, which the laws submit to their decision;—we mean the grant of money for the support of schools, and the choice of school committee men. In affirming that these are the two subjects of highest moment, within the jurisdiction of the towns, we say nothing against the fitness and necessity of other appropriations of money, or the choice of other officers. None of them, as we suppose, can be dispensed with. But just in proportion as other municipal offices and other municipal duties rise in the scale of value and importance, in the same proportion, do the paramount interests of the schools, and the responsibility of the station of their legal supervisors, advance in the scale of dignity and utility. Some municipal regulations are designed to prevent the actual commission of fraud, when a disposition to perpetrate it exists. Such are the provisions for sealing weights and measures; for the measurement of wood, &c. But one great object of the schools is to impair, circumscribe and prevent the fraudulent disposition; and to inculcate such habits of industry and frugality as will diminish the temptation to wrong. Another town regulation has regard to the maintenance of legal fences, between the estates of adjoining proprietors; and to the prompt impounding of cattle found *damage feasant* (doing damage) out of their owners' enclosures. But the schools have a far higher aim. They propose the due restraint, not of animals, but men. Their object is to build up a partition wall,—a barrier,—so thick and high, between the principles of right and wrong, in the minds of men, that the future citizens will not overleap or break through it. A truly conscientious man, whatever may be his desire, his temptation, his appetite, the moment he approaches the boundary line which separates right from wrong, beholds an obstruction,—a barrier,—more impassable than a Chinese wall. He could sooner leap the ocean, than transgress it. But as the Chinese wall could not be erected in a day; so the moral structures, which separate the kingdoms of virtue and vice, cannot be reared and consolidated at once. Again, towns have to

choose officers to superintend their prudential affairs, representatives to the Legislature to assist in the enactment of the laws of the State, and men to act the responsible part of jurymen, when those laws are administered. But how, without early training, can the men be prepared, whose intellects will contribute the accuracy, and whose morals will supply the honesty, indispensable to the proper performance of these various and difficult duties? A race of conscientious and clear-headed men do not necessarily rise up, on a given emergency, merely because they are needed. A long time may intervene between the demand and the supply. We know not of any law of nature, which, of itself and independent of the previous volitions, and efforts and institutions of men, will produce, on a sudden emergency, a generation, full of a sacred regard for the rights of others, when fortune has placed those rights in their power, and bound by a higher law than any human enactment to consult and labor for the welfare of all, even though such a course should involve some temporal sacrifices on their own part. We know of no patent mode, by which a race of good men and true can be suddenly made "to order," when a crisis in the affairs of the people demands them. Popular rights can be sustained only on the basis of justice and benevolence; and if any ranks or classes of men are beset by temptations either of nature or of social position to invade these rights, there is a necessity so much the more imperious, of providing an antidote in principles and sentiments of duty, to be taught and inculcated beforehand.

To those who are incapable of extending their views beyond the events and the interests of the current year, our assertion may seem somewhat extravagant, that the grant of moneys for schools and the choice of school committee men, are the two most important duties, which any town in its municipal character is ever called to perform. If any man be so short-sighted,—if any man have such a palsy of the imagination,—that he cannot think of his children, who are now five, ten or fifteen years of age, as having arrived at the age of twenty, twenty-five or thirty years;—that is, if he cannot overleap the line, which separates the year 1839 from 1840, and look *forwards* to such a year as 1855 or 1860, just as easily as he can look *backwards* to the year 1820 or 1825—then, indeed, our assertion, as to the relative importance of different municipal acts, may savor of extravagance. But here lies the origin of a great part of those contrasts and contradictions of opinion and feeling, which divide society on the subject of Education. The views of one portion of the community are hemmed in by narrow bounds. Distant and remote results, however certain to come, do not enter into their estimate. They look, perhaps, upon a schoolhouse, as little more than a district pound, serving substantially the same purposes for impounding the children and keeping them from present mischief, as the town pound does for the detention of the cattle; and they regard the keepers of the two as holding similar offices. But with another class, the moment the word Education strikes their ear, it propels their mind into the future. In a twinkling, a host of star-like ideas clusters around their imaginations;—usefulness, veracity, duty, love, obligations discharged, happiness won,—prosperous families, kindred neighborhoods, public freedom, a futurity of national renown. With one class, education is a feeble, no-meaning word; with the other, it is one of the most capacious and inspiring words, ever uttered by the tongue, or felt or responded to by the hearts of men.

It was lately remarked by a gentleman, not over-sensitive in his sympathies for the mass of mankind, and who loses no sleep through his anxiety for a more intelligent people, that on the subject of education, there seemed to him to be a good deal of "*cant*." We replied, that there seemed to us to be much more "*wont*." Compared with other States in the Union, Massachusetts has done worthily, in her contributions of money and labor for the maintenance of her schools. And if it were a fitting deed for a community to sit down and glorify itself for what it has done, instead of pressing onward for a

richer prize and panting for higher achievements, then, indeed, we might fold our arms, and content ourselves with an ignoble contemplation of the good deeds of the past. But it is as ruinous for a people to repose upon the honorable deeds of their ancestors, as it is for an individual to rely upon the distinction gained by his father. In either case the reliance is fatal. The honor is forfeited in the very act of pride, which boasts of it and is satisfied with it. The only way, worthily to honor the great, is to imitate their greatness. We are restricted to the narrowest ground in proving the sincerity of our gratitude to good men, for it can only be done, by striving to emulate their example. And what have our ancestors done that we cannot equal and surpass?

It is half-amusing and half-provoking to hear complaints of the burdensomeness of taxation for the support of our public schools. One hardly knows whether to smile or to upbraid. According to the best estimates which could be made, it was computed last year, that the amount of money raised by taxation for the support of the public schools in the State of Massachusetts, was not equal to one mill and six tenths of a mill on the dollar, for all the property in the State. Strange as it may appear, one mill and six tenths of a mill on the dollar, for all the property in the Commonwealth, or less than two parts in a thousand, has been pronounced by some a condemnable tax to promote the welfare of the rising generation;—the generation who are commonly called the future hope of the Republic, but with more propriety might be called the future Republic itself. If not educated, however, if suffered to grow up in ignorance and vice, they had better be called the future terror of the Republic. From the outcry which some men make against the enormity of the tax for supporting schools, one would almost suppose, that some wild enthusiasts had usurped the power of the State, and instead of levying a tax of less than two mills on a dollar, had levied all of each dollar, except two mills. Surely it is as though the mill-stone should complain of the crushing weight of the feather, which alights upon its surface. One would think the only complaint, ever uttered against such a tax, would be,—from the rich man, that its smallness was an imputation upon his liberality, and from the poor man, that it was inconvenient making change to pay it.

In the State of Ohio, one of the sources of revenue for the support of the schools is a local school tax, levied by the county. From the late Report of Mr. Lewis, the Superintendent of Common Schools, in that State, it appears, that in one of the counties, the whole amount of this local tax was one fourth of a mill on the dollar; and yet, he remarks, that "strange as it may appear, there was as much murmuring about the school tax in that, as in any other county."

Can any citizen of Massachusetts think, without having his cheeks scorched with the blush of shame, that it will ever hereafter be the solemn, yet painful duty, of any Governor of this Commonwealth, to give such an account of the extent of ignorance within our borders, as is contained in the message of Governor Campbell of Virginia, to the Legislature of that State, dated January 9th, 1839. We copy that part of the message, which relates particularly to this subject.

"The importance of an efficient system of Education, embracing, in its comprehensive and benevolent design, the whole population, cannot be too frequently recurred to.

"The statements furnished by the Clerks of five City and Borough Courts and ninety-three of the County Courts, in reply to inquiries addressed to them, ascertain, that of those who applied for marriage licenses, a large number were unable to write their names. The years selected for this inquiry were those of 1817, 1827 and 1837. The statements show that the applicants for marriage licenses in 1817, amounted to four thousand six hundred and eighty-two; of whom eleven hundred and twenty-seven were unable to write;—five thousand and forty-eight in 1827, of whom the number unable to write was eleven hundred and sixty-six;—and in 1837, the applicants were four thousand six hundred and fourteen; and of these the number of one thousand and forty-seven were unable to write their names. From which it appears, there

still exists a deplorable extent of ignorance, and that in truth it is hardly less, than it was twenty years ago, when the school fund was created. The statements, it will be remembered, are partial, not embracing quite all the counties, and are moreover confined to one sex. The education of females, it is to be feared, is in a condition of much greater neglect.

"There are now in the State two hundred thousand children, between the ages of five and fifteen. Forty thousand of these are reported to be poor children; and of them only one half to be attending schools. It may be safely assumed, that of those possessed of property, adequate to the expenses of a plain education, a large number are growing up in ignorance, for want of schools, within convenient distances. Of those at school, many derive little or no instruction; owing to the incapacity of the teachers, as well as to their culpable negligence and inattention. Thus the number, likely to remain uneducated and to grow up without just perceptions of their duties, religious, social and political, is really of appalling magnitude, and such as to appeal with affecting earnestness to a parental legislature."

It may safely be asserted, that those who cannot write, cannot read;—or, at least, that they cannot read to any valuable and improving purpose. Here then is almost one fourth part of the population of a great State, to whom books and libraries,—the tanners and civilizers of mankind,—are no better than the dead, autumnal leaves of the forest. To them, the Bible is a sealed book. Though living in the light of the nineteenth century, they are thrust backwards four centuries, into the darkness of the age, which preceded the reformation of Luther and the translation of the Scriptures into the native tongue. For them, the sages and the men of genius of our own and of former times, have not lived. We open a book, and straightway, a new train of delightful emotions, of instructive thoughts takes possession of our mind; and, if the book have been well selected, we rise from its perusal with mental invigoration and purified feelings. But to those who cannot read, a book is only as a block, a stone, a clod of earth. What other sources of political information can they have, than the mutilated, perverted and fragmentary accounts, which have come, perhaps, through a hundred hands and been distorted by each in their passage, until the current and accredited copy no longer bears the slightest resemblance to the original? What can save them from imposition and dupery? How can they decide between contradictory averments? In matters, that concern their dearest interests, what test have they, by which to distinguish between the most momentous truths and the most fatal errors? When called upon to act, they must submit themselves to the guidance of other minds, to be borne and drifted about, like atoms in a gale, like leaves upon the tide. Blind men are they, in a strange land, asking of a crowd the way homeward, and each of the crowd bewildering them with a different direction.

But unspeakably deplorable is it, that the present daughters,—the future wives and mothers of the land,—should grow up in ignorance and in the coarseness, the prejudices, the superstitions, that accompany it. The influence of woman, upon the character of individuals and the fortunes of the race, has never yet been estimated at half its value. It is one of those primary, antecedent causes, which by modifying the action of other causes, works through them, without being visible in them. Throughout all the affairs of the world and the course of life, a certain latitude and scope is given to the free action and agency of men; yet, on every side, they are straightened and hemmed in by the immutable laws of nature. Within certain limits, we seem to be intrusted with the management of our concerns, and the formation of our own fortunes; but, still our power, over the external world,—over the future,—is restricted within certain impassable boundaries. Hardly does this seem to be so, in regard to the power of the mother over her child. That power seems more like creation, than like administration. The barriers erected around us, by the ordinances of nature in other things, saying thus far shalt thou go and no farther, here seem to recede, to leave an open space, to say to the mother thy offspring is thine, make him as thou wilt. The smile of the mother, which is reproduced upon the face of the infant on her bosom, is only an emblem of that

likeness of her heart, in which his heart is formed. The development of powerful passions, after the season of infancy has passed; the struggles and vicissitudes of life, may seem to modify and transform character, and sometimes almost to change its identity; yet we doubt not, that every man carries to his deathbed certain elements of character, breathed into his soul by his mother, while he was fondled in her arms.

Such are some of the interests, which are more or less affected by our institutions for the education of our youth. Have we, then, been guilty of extravagance, in affirming, that there is no other question, submitted to the decision of our people in their primary assemblies, which is not postponed and belittled, and, we had almost said, rendered insignificant, when compared with this? Let the question be approached, then, in every town, in a spirit corresponding to its importance and the universality of the interests which it involves. The first great principle to be established, recognised, believed in, acted upon, is this; *every town can afford to do its duty.* It is the duty of every town to educate its children, up to such a point, that they may know their duties and be disposed to perform them. The limit, then, is not on the side of the money to be raised, but on that of the object to be obtained. It is emphatically a case, to be decided by the conscience, rather than the purse. For such a valuable object,—for such an assemblage of valuable objects,—cannot another mill in a dollar be afforded? This would increase the average appropriation in the State, more than one third.

In regard to the selection of school committee men, the great questions are, who are competent? who are faithful? who are devoted? The elevation of the interests to be intrusted to their hands is such as to lift all candid and conscientious men, above local jealousies and the strifes of party. Competent literary attainments, a love for children, and enlarged views in regard to the true objects of education, constitute the leading qualifications for the highly meritorious and responsible office of school committee man.

“Why, neighbor Simple,” said Mr. Farsight, one bright July morning, when Mr. Simple was mowing in a lot, where the grass stood so thinly, that the spires looked lonesome;—“why, neighbor Simple, you had a fine lot here, with a strong soil, but your blades of grass are so far apart, that they might grow into hoop-poles and not crowd each other.” “Yes,” said Mr. Simple, “I’ve been thinking I was almost a fool, for I ought to have sowed a bushel of good hay-seed upon this piece, but the truth is, I bought only a peck and so I scattered it about so much the thinner, and now I see I’ve lost a ton or two of hay by it.” “Well,” said Mr. Farsight, “don’t you think, you was about as near being a fool, when you voted, last town-meeting, against granting any more school money for sowing the seeds of knowledge in the minds of the children,—as you was when you scattered a peck of hay-seed, when you ought to have sowed a bushel? Now, remember, neighbor Simple, what I tell you;—next year, wherever there is not grass in this lot, there’ll be weeds.”

EXAMINATION OF SCHOOLS.

The close of every school is an important event, in the history of every school district. The proper examination of the schools settles far-reaching questions. If every merchant and trader, at the return of short and stated periods, takes an inventory of his stock, and balances his sheet of profit and loss, to learn the actual condition of his affairs; if every frugal and prudent husbandman, at the close of each season, looks through his granaries, his barns, his cellars, to learn the degree of success which has rewarded his labors; surely at the happening of each epoch in the mental history of

the children, their legal guardians and supervisors should set themselves carefully and earnestly to the work of ascertaining their condition and estimating their advancement. The close of every school is such an epoch. A season has passed; has any harvest been gathered? Adult age approaches; is there any better preparation, than before, for the performance of all its duties? Perhaps intellectual qualifications have been increased in the school; but are moral resolutions invigorated also?

The law imperatively requires school committees, in addition to visiting all the district schools, at their opening and close, to visit all the public schools of the town once a month, without giving previous notice thereof to the instructors, "for the purpose of making a careful examination thereof and of ascertaining that the scholars are properly supplied with books, and of inquiring into the regulation and discipline of the school and the habits and *proficiency* of the scholars therein."

Extensive duties are hereby devolved upon the school committees; but the law has wisely left it to them to determine, in most respects, in what manner these duties shall be discharged. We propose to offer a few suggestions, upon a single branch only, of these injunctions.

An examination of the school, *in order to determine the proficiency of the scholars*, involves many important particulars. It is a test-operation. The committee, having visited the school at its opening, are supposed to know substantially its state and condition, at that time. They are now to compare the present condition with the former, to learn whether it has been stationary, retrograding or advancing. This is a serious adjudication for all parties. Correct decisions, always valuable, are immensely so here. If the teacher have done his duty, he will be justified by his works. If the scholars have done theirs, they can exhibit the proofs. If some, through diligence and perseverance, have accomplished much, while others have been slothful, the hour has now come, when, for the sake of justice, for the sake of the future character of each, the good should be rewarded by an exhibition of their attainments, and the delinquent punished by an exposure of their ignorance. The proceeding reaches further, than a simple award of deserts, to the meritorious and the negligent;—it is prospective, as well as retrospective; it goes to strengthen or impair the faith of young minds, in the impartiality and the integrity of their judges; it serves to stimulate or to discourage exertion, to cultivate or to deaden the love of excellence.

But let us see, how the respective parties—the school committee, the teacher, the pupils—stand in relation to this judicial proceeding. The school committee may be supposed perfectly impartial. No bias, no preconception, for or against any child, is to give a single vibration to the balance of justice, they hold in their hands. No ties of friendship, blood, affinity, on one side; no aversion to, no wrong suffered from, any parent, on the other, is to swerve their minds from the line of rectitude.

The teacher, too, may be supposed to be upright and conscientious, but he stands upon ground, which slopes downwards towards temptation. He has the natural desire, common to all men, to be commended. Perhaps, his continuance at the head of the school for a longer period, or his reengagement for another season, or his prospect of obtaining a more lucrative school, may be dependant upon the favorable impressions, now made. All amiable motives, too, coöperate with all selfish ones. He wishes the scholars to sustain the ordeal, in such a manner, as to make the event a happy spot in their memory. Parents, with anxious looks, are present, and he sympathizes with their gratification, when the children acquit themselves honorably. Even should the teacher feel unkindly towards each individual scholar in the school, he will still desire to have the school appear well at the examination. Many a pious fraud has been committed, under a far feebler stress of temptation.

But how is it with the pupils?—the young Washingtons, or the young

Arnolds. Anxiously have they been looking forward to this day of trial; to this day of triumph or of defeat. Hope, fear, have made it present to their minds, before its arrival. In imagination, they have gone through with it a hundred times, and trembled or rejoiced at the fancied result. Many of them experience emotions, as keen as those which urge on contending politicians or contending sovereigns.

The teacher, then, from motives inseparable from his position, being anxious to have the pupils appear well, and the pupils themselves, striving to win distinction and to avert disgrace;—by whom ought the examination to be conducted? If it is left to the interested parties, may there not be danger,—we will not say of collusion—but of special preparation upon particular tables, pages, chapters;—danger, indeed, of having the windiness of a *word* exhibition? To use a trader's phrase, may not the samples offered, be better than the lots? Every temptation is on that side, and therefore, every counterpoise should be on the other. *As far as possible, then, the committees should take the examination into their own hands.*

It is impossible adequately to measure or compute the difference in the practical results of a pupil's labor, during the school, according as he studies merely from the motive of appearing well in his recitations, or, as he studies with a desire to comprehend and master the subject of his lessons. If he study simply for the hour of recitation, or for the day of exhibition, then his mind will dwell perpetually upon the circumstances of those events. He will look forward to the tests to be there applied. Whatever promises to favor success at that tribunal, however valueless, will engross him. What will not increase his chances of it, however useful, will be discarded. If a lesson is studied, simply for the recitation's sake, it will be forgotten, when the recitation is over. The object is then accomplished. But if studied for its own sake and with reference to the actual business of life, then it will be studied with a constant eye to the future, and the mind will not relinquish its hold upon it, at the moment when the examination closes. It will be retained for its supposed intrinsic value, and because the time has not yet arrived to apply it to its proper object. It has been remarked a thousand times, that the students in college, *who study for the recitation's sake*, turn out ordinary men in after-life. They load and unload their minds, so many times a day, as a laborer does his wheelbarrow, and with as little improvement of the vehicle in the former case as in the latter.

At the very opening of the schools, therefore, the committee ought to apprise both teacher and scholars, that the latter will be liable to examination by them, anywhere and everywhere, upon the studies pursued:—that they will be examined, not so much on the books used, as on the branches taught. As soon as this is proclaimed, the whole apparatus of books and implements, will be converted, in a twinkling, from ends to means. The pupils will study *to know*, instead of *to remember*; they will strive to lay up and retain their knowledge for practical uses, instead of carrying it to the recitation, to be there repeated and forgotten. The teacher and pupil will then unitedly strive to obtain facts, to discover principles, and to connect knowledge with the actual occurrences of life and the business of men. This will turn the mind's eye of both in a different direction and fix it upon a different object,—a useful and an available one,—during the whole school.

Above all, let the committee beware of recitations in grammar, in arithmetic, and in geography, from memory merely. Orthography and certain tables in arithmetic belong to memory. But the moment geography is mentioned, the earth, as it exists and revolves in space, should start up before the eye of the mind as round and as distinct, as though it were an apple suspended by a string, before the eye of the body. The mind may be trained to see the former, as clearly as the natural organ does the latter. When any city, mountain, river, is mentioned, there should be a distinct conception of its place upon this round body, the globe.

What are called *memoriter* recitations are very apt to be betrayed by a certain glibness of manner. Children can generally speak faster than they can select and arrange thoughts, but not so fast as they can remember words. A *memoriter* recitation, on subjects to which it is not appropriate, is very strong presumptive evidence, that the lesson is not understood. Let all such instances be carefully scrutinized. Cases, involving similar principles, under different forms, may be put as tests. If the pupil have grasped the principle, he can probably apply it to an analogous case. If he cannot do this, be assured he has learned only a fact;—and a fact, which perhaps, may never come under his own observation,—instead of mastering a principle, explanatory of whole classes of facts. The judgment and good sense which make distinguished men, consist mainly, in the power of applying familiar principles to new combinations of facts. The cultivation of this talent should be commenced in the school room; and nothing will conduce so much to its advancement, as to apprise the children, that they are to be examined, not so much on certain facts which their minds may contain, as on the mental operations, they are able to perform.

COMMON SCHOOL CONVENTION.

On Thursday the 24th January, the Middlesex County Association for the Improvement of Common Schools, held a very interesting meeting at the Town Hall in Charlestown.

The Hon. SAMUEL HOAR, the President of the Association, was in the chair.

The Rev. Mr. EDSON of Lowell read a very able and interesting Report on the subject of connecting moral and religious, with intellectual education. While he spoke decidedly of the necessity of this union, he adverted to difficulties, which might attend it, in consequence of the various denominational views, prevalent in the community. We did not understand him to say that this difficulty would, in his opinion, be insuperable. We understood him to suggest, that the teachers of the Sunday Schools should keep some records of the attainments made in religious knowledge, by the pupils of their respective schools, and should transmit the result of these records to the teachers of the public schools, who should incorporate them into their own records of the intellectual progress of the pupils, and thus present at one view and on one sheet, the state of intellectual, moral and religious proficiency of their pupils. The Report was in every respect a clear, candid and liberal document.

Rev. Mr. WILLARD of Newton, while he subscribed to many of the views contained in the Report, thought that an importance, somewhat disproportionate, had been assigned to mere instruction in religious knowledge. Merely committing to memory certain texts of Scripture, or certain forms of expression in which religious truth was supposed to be embodied, without imbibing the spirit of those truths, without exciting the feelings to love them, without rousing the will to act in accordance with them, he did not think had much permanent and beneficial effect upon the character. A form of truth which rested in the memory, but was not incorporated into the life, had failed of accomplishing the object and mission of truth.

Rev. Mr. STETSON of Medford submitted the following Resolution:—

Resolved, That the course of instruction in Common Schools, ought to be so ample and various as to meet the wants of all classes of the community.

Mr. Stetson said,

Mr President—In supporting the resolution before you I shall make a few remarks on the wants of the community, its resources and the best method of applying them to the purposes of universal Education.

Of the wants of the community, it seems to me that a large part of our

fellow citizens entertain very inadequate ideas. They are yet to be told, with new emphasis and in terms of profoundest sympathy, what Education really means. I cannot deem a man educated because he has, at some remote period of his life, been taught to read—but because he has acquired a thirst for knowledge—because he *has* read and does read—and to good purpose. Loudly as we boast of our public schools, we are, in no high sense, a reading or thinking people; because our actual system of instruction does not wake up the intelligent soul to free and vigorous activity. It does not satisfy the wants of the whole intellectual and spiritual being. It needs to be distinctly understood that the faculty of reading—painfully and laboriously it may be—is not an end, but a means, by which ignorance may converse with wisdom. You may as well call a boy a carpenter because he has got into his hands a chisel, or a plane, which he has neither desire nor skill to use, as to call him educated when he quits the school with an uncertain hold of the instruments of knowledge.

I have in my mind an ideal of universal culture far more thorough and comprehensive than has yet been realized. It is the harmonious unfolding of the whole intellectual and moral nature. It is not easy to determine the exact point to which the standard of universal Education may be raised. We have a right to demand that it shall be at least as high as an intelligent and industrious scholar can reach, with the best aids and encouragements, before the age of fourteen. This would give to the pupils of the Common Schools a cultivation, adapted to the general purposes of life, equivalent in amount to that of the lower classes of students in our colleges. I would carefully distinguish between the words, instruct and educate. Observe their different significance. To instruct is to provide, furnish, pour in something to the mind, which may be quite passive all the time, may either retain or lose it,—at any rate does not reproduce it by its own working. To educate is to call forth,—draw out, to a generous activity, the faculties which lie buried in the soul itself. This is the teacher's great function—to develop the whole living being. It is poorly fulfilled by a system which aims only to instruct.

I maintain, sir, that the Commonwealth is pledged to such a course of public Education as I have indicated. This is not a new question. The question is not now, whether we shall or shall not have public schools for the whole people, but whether they shall or shall not be made fit to accomplish their great objects. In the infancy of these colonies of the wilderness, from which the State of Massachusetts has grown, our wise fathers determined that all their posterity should be well educated. The question now is, how shall we carry out their liberal views? What are the wants of the rising generation? Are they less than I have stated? Shall the State acknowledge the duty of a nursing mother to her children, and yet prove herself a niggard stepdame? Shall we “keep the word of promise to the ear and break it to the hope?” “If our children ask bread, shall we give them a stone?”

I regret, sir, to observe that this want of liberal, universal culture is not fully admitted. You may hear one ask,—and with the air of a man who thinks the question settled—why should that grim craftsman, whose lot it is to stand before his anvil and forge and fashion his iron with strong hammer-strokes, have a mental cultivation beyond the ability to keep account of his horse-shoes and plough-irons, and read his Bible and newspaper? What is the use of education to him? Use? Why, is he not an immortal man, or only a system of muscles and sinews—a working machine? Is he not an *end* to himself? Are not his own worth, power, wisdom, the greatest of all ends to him? If I send my son away from home to learn the trade of a builder, I do not want him to be a mere carpenter and nothing more. I want him to be a whole man, of enlarged mind and liberal sentiments. The man is more than the mechanic. As I would have him accomplished in the art and mystery of plane and saw, *by* which he lives, much more would I

have him accomplished in the greater art and mystery of manhood, *for* which he lives—and he will build a church or a stable never the worse.

Sir, I ask not, what is the use of education to the poor man who must “get his bread by the sweat of his brow.” It is enough that he is a man. I reverence every human being, without regard to his outward trappings, as *man*, a brother, in whom lies buried the power of great thought and great action. I would have all men feel the softening and humanizing effect of a generous cultivation. I would fill the universal soul with intelligence and beauty. I would give the poor, fatherless, homeless child, a chance to become a just, thinking, high-souled man; and show him how he may continue to unfold his spiritual nature while he is working his way to competence and respectability, by muscular force or handicraft skill. An intellectual hodman may strike you as an absurdity, if you have always seen hodmen ignorant. Educate the class—remove the peculiarity of the individual, and the absurdity disappears. Wherever I see a man, sir, I see the rudiments of a great soul. In every human being, with all his poor performances, I recognise sublime possibilities, which make the philanthropist’s dream of universal culture, no dream, but a revelation of God rather, to the heart of this age. The realizing of these possibilities, sir, is the great want of all classes of this community.

What, then, are the resources which can be applied to this object?

The whole property of the Commonwealth is pledged to the education of its children. It can be appropriated to no nobler end. What the public undertakes to do, it is bound to do in a proper and effectual manner. It has not undertaken to educate lawyers, clergymen, or physicians, and it is under no obligation to do so. But men and women it has undertaken to qualify for their high calling, as husbands, wives, parents, citizens, by whom the great movement of life is to be carried on, and it is bound to provide the means of fitting them for their manifold duties and enjoyments. This burden, if a burden it be, must be borne by those who have property or surplus income, for the poor cannot pay taxes. For an object so great and important as this, no moderate tax ought to be deemed a grievance.

But this Commonwealth has great resources, amply sufficient, I believe, for the end proposed, without laying upon property a heavier burden than it now bears. By the report of the Secretary of State for the year 1837, it appears, that in two hundred and eighty-nine towns the amount of taxes for public schools was, in round numbers, \$ 391,000
While the expense for private tuition, was 374,000

Total, \$ 765,000

Thus it appears that more than three quarters of a million dollars are annually appropriated to the education of the children of the State, nearly one half of which is paid for tuition, which the public schools are not deemed competent to supply. Thus are the resources of the State, which are now applied to this object, frittered away upon two defective and inadequate systems, instead of being concentrated upon one, which, with such additional pecuniary force, might be capable of meeting the wants of all classes of the community. They who have taxable property are doubly burdened, first, to support the Common Schools at home, and next, to educate their children abroad. But the cost of private instruction, which I have stated, large as it is, represents but a part of the expenditure actually incurred for this object. For those who have to send their children to other towns for academic instruction, the mere tuition is a trifle compared with the cost of maintaining them at a distance from home. This is a grievous burden even to wealthy families with many children, and to those of moderate income quite intolerable. Yet such is the low condition of the Common Schools in many of our towns and in such mean estimation are they held, that many distress themselves to have their children educated abroad at an annual

expense of from one hundred to three hundred dollars each. This contemptuous desertion of the public schools by all who can by any possibility avoid them, has the worst moral effect upon these institutions,—causing them to be regarded, in some cases, much in the light of pauper establishments, to which there is some shame and little profit in resorting. Poor people are not likely to prize, or turn to good account, that which is furnished for poor people only. I have known these dishonored seminaries to be despised and neglected by their natural guardians, and then no matter what was the teacher, provided he would work cheap. Wisdom was doled out like soup at a charity house in a time of famine—a pint to each comer—and that thin.

The resources of the State, sir, which are now applied to school education, are crippled by division. Let that part, which the wealthier classes now choose to expend for private tuition, be added to that which must be expended for Common Schools, and we shall have a system of instruction, thorough, ample and various enough to meet the wants of all classes of the community. And I have no doubt that the rich would find it greatly for their advantage to have their children educated along with the rest, instead of supporting one class of schools for themselves and another to satisfy the demands of the law.

This, sir, is a point of immense importance to the welfare of our community. I wish to see the Common Schools of every town in this Commonwealth enjoying the support, the countenance and the watchful care of all good and intelligent citizens. Let them have that respect and favor which they so much need—let them be regarded as the pride and hope of the country, and they may safely be permitted to supersede those private institutions, which have grown out of the beggarly character of the system of public instruction.

For many of these schools are, and all may be made, better than most private institutions can be. I have already alluded to the estimation in which they would be held, if the whole people, rich as well as poor, looked to them as the common nursery of their children. No longer will they be despised and neglected by the most influential persons in society. No longer will they drag out a poor existence, barely kept alive by taxes extorted from those who have no interest in them. No longer will throngs of children be crowded into a miserable shanty, where they have no vital air to breathe, unless when all the winds of heaven are whistling and moaning through the shattered sides and broken windows. No, sir, we should have liberal appropriations; taxes ungrudgingly voted for this noblest of objects; teachers generously paid and such as deserve pay and honor;—the “District School as it was” would disappear, and in its place would rise a spacious and tasteful edifice, to which our children would resort in great gladness of heart. Mr. President, I have seen such changes as these occur, in no more than four or five years, under the present imperfect system of encouragement for Common Schools. What may we not expect when all the wealth, respectability, virtue and wisdom of the community shall conspire to lend them aid and do them honor!

Undoubtedly the vast funds disengaged from the support of private institutions, with a judicious employment of accomplished female teachers for all the younger children, will make the public school a better seminary than the country academy. For, suppose the latter institution to have the best of teachers, it is necessarily composed of intractable materials. Its scholars are gathered from every quarter and are perpetually changing. Every one is sent from home with a label on him, directing the teacher what to make of him. Among thirty scholars, he will find about as many objects of pursuit and as many different classes; so that his whole time is frittered away upon minute divisions of his school and little or nothing is done for any of them. I know something of this work, sir. A man must have all the patience of

Job to go through it, without losing his temper or his wits; and more than human aptitude to teach, if he can make any thing of a school with a constitution so radically defective.

Now the public school has great advantages over an institution of this kind. The scholars are for the most part permanent; they are to go through a regular course of studies, and can be arranged into a small number of classes, so that the teacher may have time for careful and thorough attention to each. Besides, he will derive no unimportant aid from a faithful and intelligent school committee—still more from the estimation in which he will be held by the parents of his pupils who live around him.

One great advantage of education in public schools, is that it enables us to keep our children at home under parental care and influence. I have before spoken of the enormous expense and inconvenience of sending them away; but this is a trifle compared with the moral evil. Parents are bereaved of their children; their house is left unto them desolate; children are separated from their natural guardians for several years when the deepest impressions are struck into the character. And they go, with their beautiful young affections, amongst strangers, where nothing can be had save what money may buy—perhaps to live in that most heartless of all heartless places, a boarding-house—where there are plenty of people, but no family—a shelter and a table, but no home of the soul.

I think, sir, finally, that the education of all classes of the community, in the same nurseries of mind, would produce the happiest social and moral effects. If I had fifty children, with the resources of a prince at my disposal, —I would place them all at public schools. I want to see the children of the rich and the poor sit down side by side on equal terms, as members of one family—a great brotherhood—deeming no one distinguished above the rest but the best scholar and the best boy—giving free and natural play to their affections, at a time of life when lasting friendships are often formed, and worldliness and pride and envy have not yet alienated heart from heart. I would cherish the self-respect of the children of the poor by giving them a free and open field of exertion, where the greatest merit should always obtain the highest rewards. I would not have their sense of character destroyed by the necessity of attending schools from which the wealthier families withhold their children, as if there were contamination in the society. The different classes of the community will love and honor each other, when they come to remember these intimate associations of their childhood and the great lesson they taught—namely, that true dignity and worth depend not upon the outward but upon the inward man. Such is the lesson which every one is compelled to learn at our University. There no student derives any consequence from the wealth or social standing of his family connexions. No matter how poor he is, the only questions are, is he a scholar, is he a gentleman, is he a man of worth and honor. The most indigent student in the classes is often found to be the most respected and most influential of all. And these manly feelings, which grow up in the close intimacy of generous youth, will survive all the changes of after-life, which separate us so widely from our early associates.

The different classes are so much separated when young, that they greatly misunderstand each other when they grow up. The bonds of sympathy need to be drawn closer; for society is well nigh rent asunder by distrust, envy, and all hateful passions. But I am not ashamed, sir, to declare my hope and faith in the people. The majority may for a time be wrong-headed, but wrong-hearted never. They have an inextinguishable sense of right. They can be persuaded to what is wrong only by being deceived. Let them be lifted above a low sphere of thought and enjoyment—let all classes receive together, in the bosom of the public institutions, a generous culture fit for an American freeman, and what is more—fit for an immortal man,—then all those unworthy feelings which do so immitter man

against man, and class against class, and threaten disaster to our country, will die away, and fellow citizen, be another name for friend.

Such, sir, is my idea of a system of public instruction, which shall meet the wants of all classes of the community. I believe it may, to a great extent, be realized without pressing too severely on the pecuniary resources of the people. Some institutions for classical instruction, or the refinements of a polite education, may still be required; but these are obvious exceptions on which it is not necessary to dwell.

Rev. Mr. WILLARD sustained the Resolution by showing that it was a most serious injury to any child to acquire the notion, that he was born to such advantages of wealth, family, or station in society, as would tend to weaken his own exertions for improvement.

Rev. Dr. FAY of Charlestown submitted the following Resolution:—

Resolved, That the Massachusetts Board of Education, in the development of their plans and measures, have not, in the opinion of this Association, interfered with the rights or intermeddled with the differences of the different religious sects or political parties in the Commonwealth;—but have pursued an enlightened and impartial course, which entitles them to the support and confidence of the friends of Education.

Dr. Fay said there were strong reasons, which impelled him to present this Resolution. It is said through the papers of one religious denomination that the Board of Education intend to introduce sectarian religion into the schools. In an opposite quarter it is asserted, that the Board intend to exclude religion from the schools. Both charges could not be true. Now if the Board have done nothing to give rise to jealousies on this subject, or have shown no disposition to depart from the true line of action as prescribed to them by the statutes, then the jealousy of no party ought to be excited against them, nor the support of any party withheld from them. The parties, instead of making contradictory accusations, ought to give them their united support. He thought it the duty of fair and candid men to prevent an increase of these jealousies; and the Association, by expressing such a conviction, might do much to allay groundless apprehensions.

Rev. Mr. DODGE of Lexington, rejoiced that the Resolution had been offered, and still more, that such a Resolution had come from a gentleman, so well known and so much respected in one of the religious denominations, from which attempts to excite suspicions had proceeded. When the Board was constituted, it contained no member of the denomination to which he belonged, (Baptist.) He did not complain of that. But from the beginning he had looked carefully at the proceedings of the Board. And within a few months, on account of the proposed measure of establishing a Normal School at Lexington, he had inquired into and reviewed their whole course. So far from there being any thing exceptionable in it, he was convinced that it ought to give universal satisfaction, and that they were entitled to the gratitude of the community. A pamphlet had been printed and circulated, which had excited some suspicions. But its origin and motive were now well understood. It seized upon a single expression in the Report of the Secretary of the Board, cut it out from its connexion and perverted it, and founded its whole charge upon the perversion; while the very paragraph from which it was taken, contained a refutation of the charge. He gave his cordial support to the Resolution.

Dr. Fay rose again and said, that it was well known to all who were acquainted with the school law, that the Board of Education had no authority over school books. That belongs to the committees. Nothing can be done without the consent of the committees, whom we choose every year from amongst ourselves. For his part, he had full confidence in the Board, and did not believe that it was in their hearts to step out of the line of conduct proper to them.

It appeared from the third number of the Common School Journal, which

he had just received, what it was the intention of the Board to do in regard to the Normal Schools, whose regulations, they were obliged by law to make. And their course, in regard to these schools, he believed would satisfy all parts of the Christian community. There is a morbid sensibility on this subject. When the Board shall attempt to introduce sectarianism, or to rule out the Bible; then they ought to be and will be arrested. But until they have done something objectionable, is it right to discourage them? Is it right to diminish their influence? Is it right to scatter suspicions of their conduct? These suspicions ought to be allayed, so that the Board can go on, and aid the great work of Education, which they are bound to promote and which he believed they were endeavoring to promote. Let us show them equitable treatment. It will be time enough to accuse them, when they have departed from their duty.

CHARLES THOMPSON, Esq., of Charlestown, said it was surprising, from what slight things men would sometimes make accusations. He read the only passage, which had ever been excepted to. He was sure that no reasonable or candid man could see any thing objectionable in it. The confidence and coöperation of the public were necessary to the success of the Board, and he trusted, that the community would not injure themselves so much as to withhold that confidence and coöperation without cause.

GEORGE W. WARREN, Esq., offered the following Resolution:—

Resolved, That we believe the establishment of a *Normal School* in this vicinity promises to do much for the promotion of Common School Education.

R. RANTOUL, JR., Esq., of Gloucester, supported this Resolution, in a very able manner, but we have no sketch of his remarks.

Rev. Mr. DODGE offered the following:—

Resolved, That the high character of the teachers of the Common Schools in this county encourages the hope, that the cause of Education will, by their efforts, be greatly promoted.

On motion of Mr. MUZZEY, a Resolution was passed, recommending the appointment of a committee, whose duty it should be to procure the delivery of Lectures on the subject of Education in the several towns in this county. And

OLIVER S. KEITH of Cambridge,
GEORGE W. WARREN of Charlestown,
BENJAMIN MUZZEY of Lexington,
JOSEPH W. WARREN of Lowell,
DR. E. HOBBS of Waltham,

were appointed.

All the above resolutions were adopted.

In the evening, the Secretary of the Board of Education delivered an Address to a crowded assembly.

EDUCATION IN MAINE.

We rejoice, that our sister State of Maine, which for so many years constituted a part of the territory of Massachusetts,—was bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh,—though now forming an independent civil community, is still allied to us by the moral tie of a zeal for the improvement of the mass of the people, through the instrumentality of a more comprehensive and efficient system of Common School Education. We copy the following from the Message of Governor Fairfield to the Legislature, dated January 4, 1839, which reflects honor upon Maine, by marking out so liberal a course for her adoption, and upon Massachusetts by suggesting the expediency of imitating her course of legislative action.

"It must be a source of sincere gratification to every one feeling an interest in the cause of human improvement, as well as to every well wisher of his country and its institutions, that the subject of Education, especially in connexion with our primary schools, is beginning to receive the attention it so richly deserves. Based, as our free institutions are, upon the virtue and intelligence of the people, the cause of Common Schools, I trust, will ever command the fostering care of the Legislature. And every friend of religion and of morals—every one desirous of witnessing a ready obedience to the laws, the prevalence of temperance, virtue and good order in the community, may here find an ample field for his most strenuous and untiring efforts. Upon this subject, you, as legislators, can hardly do too much. The most anxious solicitude—the most unwearyed exertions—the amplest expenditure, will scarcely fail to secure a rich and enduring recompense.

"While it is admitted that our system, or that prevailing in New England, combines advantages surpassed, perhaps, by few others, if any, in the world, still, that there is much, very much room for improvement, no one can doubt who has turned his attention at all to the subject. The best mode however, of effecting this, is left for your united wisdom and experience to devise.

"Without pretending to any superior knowledge in regard to this matter—and being much more willing to follow a well chosen track, than ambitious to originate new ones, I would suggest for your consideration, whether the establishment of a Board of Education, with an active, zealous and efficient Secretary, to collect information touching the existing state of our schools—present modes of instruction—qualifications of teachers—construction of schoolhouses, &c. and to disseminate information upon these and kindred subjects, by lectures and otherwise, similar to the course adopted in Massachusetts, might not be found to be the most judicious mode of beginning the great work of reform and improvement.

"And whether a Seminary might not be endowed, or a department in some existing institution exclusively devoted to the education of teachers for our Common Schools, is well worthy of consideration. Our ideas, however, must necessarily be somewhat indefinite, as to the precise means of improvement, until the statistics upon this subject have been faithfully collected.

"If the establishment of such a board as has been suggested should not yield all the benefits now anticipated from it, yet it is believed, that, if it do nothing more than to awaken public attention, and induce more reflection and comparing of opinions upon the subject, such an impetus will be thereby given to the cause of Education, as will amply compensate for all the time and expense bestowed.

"Several very valuable publications upon the subject of education having lately been put forth, I would further suggest, whether extracts from them, under the supervision of a suitable committee, and a republication of them at the public expense, for liberal distribution among the people, would not be eminently useful in promoting juster views, and exciting a more ardent interest in the great cause of Common School Education."

MICHIGAN.

When a State casts a great vote for the Administration, the Administration papers publish, in giant capitals, "THREE CHEERS" for such a State. When the vote is the other way, the *Opposition* papers put out their "THREE CHEERS"—in rival capitals. Let any friend of the rising generation—belonging to any party—read the following extract from an address of the Hon. John D. Pierce, respecting the resources of the State of Michigan for public instruction, and we doubt not he will exclaim "THREE CHEERS" for Michigan.

"Amid all these schemes and operations for the general welfare, the great subject of Education has not been neglected. A system for the organization and support of primary schools, has been devised—a plan for a University, with an indefinite number of branches, adopted—and measures taken for the disposition of the university and school lands. The foundation for the whole is laid in the Constitution of the State, which contains provisions not to be found in the Constitution of any other State of this Union. Of the Michigan school system—the superstructure reared upon this basis—of the suitableness of its several parts, of its proportions, and adaptation to the wants of an infant republic of giant strength, I shall not speak, and the reason will doubtless be understood and duly appreciated by all who hear me. But of the means of our State for the support of education in all its departments, I can speak with confidence. If the university lands should average twenty dollars per acre—and they bid fair to do that—it would give us a permanent fund of \$921,600; the interest of which would be annually \$64,512. The primary school fund, however, is the most magnificent, and really the most important. It is soon destined, we trust, to carry the means of a good education to every child within the limits of the State. The school lands

amount to rising of 1,100,000 acres. Should the average be but five dollars the acre, it would give us over \$5,000,000; the interest of this would be \$350,000 yearly. These estimates may seem extravagant, but it is believed that the result will exceed, rather than fall short of this computation. Time, the great discloser of events, will yet develop the resources of Michigan for the promotion of literature and science, and enstamp upon them a value, of which few seem to have had any adequate conception. It is true, much depends on good management and wise councils.

"Let me say in this connexion, that no subject so supremely affects the every day interests of man, as Education. By education, I mean the training of the whole man—the development and proper exercise of all his powers—the cultivation of his physical, intellectual, moral and religious nature. This is education—and emphatically, a *Christian education*. While the ardor of patriotism glows in every bosom, it becomes every citizen in the State, by all that is sacred in the rights of man, in life, liberty and happiness, to lend a helping hand in forwarding this great work; the object of which is to bring up an entire race to all that is noble and excellent in knowledge, virtue and religion. We need wisdom, and prudence, and foresight, in our councils as a State; fixedness of purpose, integrity and uprightness in our rulers; unwavering attachment to the rights of man among all our people; but these high attributes of a noble patriotism, these essential elements of civilization and improvement, will disappear when schools shall cease to exert an all pervading influence through the length and breadth of our land. You may dig your canals, construct your railroads, build ships and steamboats of enormous size, improve your land by the highest cultivation, erect your mansions and even palaces, provide yourselves the most costly equipage, with all the luxuries of life, and furnish your children with all the wealth of the Indies—and you have yet done nothing to promote their permanent and essential interests, unless you have given them a good moral education, founded upon the principles of the Bible."

THE YOUNG MEN OF OUR LAND.

[From the Michigan Journal of Education.]

To the young men of this nation is soon to descend the all important trust of guiding the destiny of our country; and it becomes them with all solemnity to prepare for the responsibility. The death, a few years ago, of the last signer of the declaration of our independence, told us that one generation had passed away; and the present incumbent of the presidential chair is the first of another that has been called to that important trust.

Soon it must devolve, with all its cares, upon yet another. How important, then, that each rising generation should be early taught, and should early apply themselves to a knowledge of the *nature*, the *uses*, and the *ends of all government*, that through them, ours may be transmitted unimpaired to after generations. The departed spirits of those who once filled the measure of their country's glory are looking down to behold, and the few venerable men who yet live to tell the story of the birth of American Independence, are intensely watching to discover, whether you, their children, will prove yourselves worthy the inheritance they leave behind.

Cultivate, then, the patriotic spirit, the high devotion, the eminent piety of those great men who have gone before you, and looking up to the Author of all wisdom, for strength "to run the race that is set before you," adopt ever as your own the sentiment of the great statesman, "that while the Union lasts there are high, exciting, gratifying prospects spread out before you for yourselves and your children." Then indeed will you breathe, with your latest breath, that other sentiment, dear to every true American heart, "liberty and union, now and forever, one and inseparable."

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